

Thomas Massey
1617

*Submission with Praise to God, on the
Death of Hopeful Children.*

A
S E R M O N

Preached in

NEW COURT, *March* 5, 1748-9.

By JOSEPH PITTS, *

On Occasion of the Death of his only Son,
who departed this Life, *February* 23, in the
Sixteenth Year of his Age.

With some ACCOUNT of his Character, his
Behaviour in his Sickneſs, and his Laſt
Words.

Published at the Request of Many who heard it.

To which is added

A POEM by the Rev^d. Mr. THO. GIBBONS.

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17-3-9



A Question of the South of the only son
and daughter-in-law, February, in the
first part of the year.

His name is not known, but his father is

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A FORM by the Rev. Mr. T. C. C. C.

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T H E

P R E F A C E.

WHEN it pleased God, in his all-wise Providence, to touch me in so very sensible and tender a Part, as All must allow the Death of an only and most hopeful Son to be, my Thoughts were soon turned to the Words of Job, Chap. i. Ver. 21. as a proper Subject for a Funeral Discourse on such an Occasion. And I am informed, that the greatest Part of the Auditory to whom I preached this Sermon, in the ordinary Course of my Ministry among them, were much affected with it; Many even to Tears: Insomuch that I have been earnestly desired to publish it, as

What

What may be of Service to Parents in the like Circumstances with myself, and to young Persons; and will oblige many of my Friends; to whom indeed, as I ought not, so neither can I deny any thing which is in my Power. And I take this Opportunity to return them my most sincere Thanks for the many fervent Prayers they put up on the Behalf of my dear Child. And though God did not think fit to spare that Life, the Continuance of which for his Glory we so much desired, yet I cannot but look on it as a most gracious Answer to Prayer, that we had such abundant Satisfaction with Respect to his Spiritual State during his Illness, and particularly in the last Hour of his Life.

As it is a precious Odour on his Memory, so it is a refreshing Comfort to myself in my Affliction, that he was made so happy as to please Every one he had to do with; to be esteemed and
loved

P R E F A C E. [v]

loved by All who were acquainted with him; and that They who knew him best were the fondest of him. His Tutor, the Rev. Mr. John Walker at Plaisterers Hall, under whose Care he was about a Year and Half, had a particular Affection for him on account of his Capacity and Diligence. Mr. Marryat, with whom he was upon Liking as a Clerk, had a great Value for him. From a Child he loved Learning, and knew the Holy Scriptures; having been able to read a Chapter in the Bible at the Age of Three Years and Three Quarters. And Few young Persons, I believe, take more Pleasure in improving their Minds than he did.

From these Considerations (in the Mention of which all tender Parents will easily indulge me) every gracious Heart will gather what a hard Piece of Work I had to deliver the following Sermon, especially the latter Part of it.

ii. But I desire to bless God, who was in this Matter, (as indeed he hath often been)) so much better to me than my Fears. If Any shall receive the least Advantage by reading, as, I hope, Some have done by hearing it, it will, indeed, be sowing in Tears and reaping in Joy, and a new Accession of Comfort to me under this sore Trial, this heavy Affliction. And I desire, that All such would bear me on their Hearts when at the Throne of Grace.

Little Kirby-street,
March 16, 1748-9.

JOSEPH PITTS.

Job Chap. i. Ver. 21.

The latter Part.

*The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away;
blessed be the Name of the Lord.*

TIS too common for Persons, when the Hand of God is stretched out against them, and lies very heavily upon them, to imagine that their Troubles are greater than those of others, and to say with the Church, *Is there any Sorrow like to my Sorrow* †? But if they read over this Chapter, wherein our Text is, and consider what Job, that excellent Person, and eminent Servant of God, met with, they cannot but see what little Ground there is for such a Conclusion against themselves, let their Afflictions be what they may. Nay, must not they blush and be ashamed, when they consider in what manner *he* behaved, though the Burthens which *they* complain so much of, and are ready to sink under, are by no means to be compared with *his*? Have we lost Part

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† Lam. i. 12.

of our worldly Substance? *Job* was stript of *all his*, though it was very great; for he had been the richest Man in that Part of the World. Have we been deprived of a Child or two *? He lost all the Children he had; no less than Ten, *seven Sons, and three Daughters*; and all this at once, by a sudden and unexpected Stroke; the House, in which they were making merry, being blown down by a great Wind, and burying them in its Ruins. And yet, even at such a Time as this, could the good Man *worship God* and bless his Name; saying, as in the Text, *The Lord gave, &c.* He was sensible, that *he brought Nothing with him into this World*, and knew, *he could carry Nothing out †*. And as it was the same God, who had both given to him, and taken from him, he desired to praise his Name.

1. *The Lord gave.* 'Tis God who gives us whatever we have of the good Things of this Life. *Every good Gift* of a temporal Nature, as well as spiritual Gifts, which are much better, and will hereafter be perfected, *is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights ‡*. 'Tis he *who giveth Power to get Wealth*.

2. *It was the Lord who had taken away.* When we lose Creature-Comforts, 'tis God takes

* I buried another Son *March* the 17th, 1747-8.

† 1 Tim. vi. 7. ‡ Jam. i. 17.

takes them from us. Who or Whatever may be *the Instruments*, we should look beyond *them*, and see *the Hand of God*. And since *Job* was fully persuaded this was the Case, we have the less Reason to wonder at what he adds,

3. And lastly, *Blessed be the Name of the Lord*. So far was he from *charging God foolishly*, or *sinning with his Lips*, that he had in his Heart the highest Esteem of God's infinite Perfections, and praised him *with his Mouth*.

The Proposition from the Word is this,

We ought to bless a taking, as well as a giving God. Or thus,

God's Name is to be praised, not only when we are under smiling, but likewise frowning Dispensations of Providence. This holds true with respect to every Kind of Trouble; as Crosses and Disappointments in the World; Want of Health or Ease, &c. But I shall confine myself at present to *the Loss of near Relations*, when God removes them from us by Death.

The Method in which I propose to handle this Subject, is,

I. *To show what we are to understand by blessing God's Name at such Times*.

II. *To prove the Proposition, or make it appear, that it is our Duty to bless God, not only when he gives, but also when he takes away*.

III. *To make some Application.*

I. I would shew what we are to understand by *blessing God's Name at such Times*. I suppose, I need not stand particularly to shew, that by *the Name of God* is meant God himself, or his glorious Perfections; nor, that by *blessing God* , we do not make him more blessed than he is in himself, or add the least to his essential Glory and Happiness. This all the Saints and Angels in Heaven are not capable of doing. But we bless God's Name, when we *ascribe to him the Glory which is his Due, and offer the Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving to him* †.

Here I would observe, 1. Blessing God's Name on such Occasions doth not exclude a *becoming Grief* at the Loss of near and dear Relatives. * But,

2. It supposeth, that we are far from *thinking* , and much farther from *speaking, hardly* of God.

3. We are not to bless God for such Strokes *in themselves considered* . But,

4. And lastly, We should bless God, or praise his Name, at such Times, because we may be assured; if we are true Believers; that *he designs to do us Good thereby, though we at present, perhaps, cannot see how* .

I. Blessing

† Heb. xiii. 15.

1. Blessing God's Name on such Occasions doth not exclude a *becoming* Grief at the Loss of near and dear Relatives. A *Stoical Insensibility* when we are thus exercised, is so far from being an *Attainment*, or an *Accomplishment*, that I should look on it as a *Judgment*; and what we should rather guard against, if in any Danger of it, than endeavour after. 'Tis as criminal, if not more so, to *despise the Chastening of the Lord*, as to *faint when we are rebuked of him* †. God is speaking to us at such Times. *His Rod hath a Voice*, and we should desire to *hear it*, and What *he, who hath appointed it*, would have us *learn thereby* †. God is *contending with us*, and we should seriously enquire *wherefore it is*. And if we are not quite blind, we shall soon see, there is a Cause, and that this Cause is Sin.

We may weep; nay, I think, *it becometh us* to be so concerned, when it is thus with us; and it would look as if we were void of natural Affection, if we were not. It is an *immoderate Sorrow* only which is forbidden; that is, when we so far indulge it, as thereby to unfit ourselves for the Duties which are incumbent on us. When *Sarah* died, we are told, *Abraham mourned for her* *. And *Jacob*, though he had Eleven other Sons living, *wept exceedingly*, when he thought *Joseph* was dead; being made to believe by his other Sons,

who

† Heb. xii. 5.

† Mic. vi. 9.

* Gen. xxiii. 2.

who had sold him, *that some evil Beast had devoured him*. Indeed, One would think he loved *this Son* of his too much : For 'tis said, *He loved Joseph more than all his Children*; which made him almost inconsolable for the supposed Loss of him *. But,

2. It supposeth, that we are far from *thinking*, and much farther from *speaking*, hardly of God. In what *an unbecoming Manner* have some expressed themselves on such Occasions ? And though we may set a Watch before our Mouths, and so keep the Door of our Lips as not to offend with our Tongues, yet are not *such Thoughts* ready to arise in our Minds as we cannot defend, but must be ashamed of, as *God knows them altogether* ? However, gracious Souls will not *allow*, but *strive against* them, and *be humbled for* them. *They hate vain Thoughts* †, and therefore, to be sure, *wicked Thoughts*, which all *hard Thoughts* of God are. They know, All on this Side Hell is Mercy ; and therefore *no living Man can have any Reason to complain* ‡ ; and They least of all, whom God hath been so good and kind to.

They have enough to support them under the heaviest Afflictions : Not only to keep them from *murmuring*, but enable them to *rejoice, and bless the Name of the Lord their God*.

* Gen. xxxvii. 3, 33, &c.

† Psal. cxix. 113.

‡ Lam. iii. 39.

God. What can any outward Trouble be, even the Loss of the dearest Relations (and I suppose, it will be allowed, that *few*, if any, exceed this) to Those who know, *that God hath made with them an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all Things and sure?* David was, perhaps, as affectionate a Father as most ever were; and yet he could solace himself with such Thoughts as these, when several of his Children had been cut off by Death, even tho' he had but little Ground to hope concerning their State for Eternity *.

3. We are not to bless God for such Strokes, *in themselves considered*. They may be called *Evils*, as Sin is the Occasion or procuring Cause of them. Had it not been for Sin, there had been no Sorrow of any Kind. It was *That* made way for *This*, and ushered it into the World. Sin is not only *the Parent of Death* †, but of all the other Evils to which we are liable while in this World.

God visits us for our Iniquities with Rods and Stripes; and how often may we see our Sin in our Punishment? When we consider Things, we cannot but perceive What it is which hath provoked God to deal thus with us. *As sure as ever Believers please themselves too much with any Creature-Enjoyment, and let it have more of their Hearts than they* ought,

* 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

† Rom. v. 12.

ought, God will either embitter it to them, or take it from them. Parents are, for the most part, very desirous of having Children, and too fond of them when they have them; ready to set their Affections too much on them. And what is the Consequence? Why, they often prove *Heart-breakings* to them, and *bring down their gray Hairs with Sorrow to the Grave*; or God sees it necessary to remove them, that we may keep closer to him, and walk more constantly as well as humbly with him. But,

4. And lastly, We should bless God, or praise his Name, at such times, because we may be assured, if we are true Believers, that *he designs to do us Good thereby, though we at present, perhaps, cannot see how.* The very same Things which are *Judgments* to the Wicked, are not so to the Godly; but are sent in *Mercy* to them, and intended for their Advantage. How often doth God *bring Good out of Evil, and Light out of Darknes*? *Providence is frequently very mysterious*, and we know not What to make of its Dispensations; how to account for them, and reconcile them with God's Love to us, and the Promises he hath made in the Covenant of Grace, *on which he hath caused us to hope.* But is This at all to be wondered at, since *we are but of Yesterday, and know nothing?* *

Jacob

Jacob was a very good Man, and had had large Experience of God's Goodness and Care; and yet, when he thought *Joseph* was dead, and was told, that *Simeon* was detained in *Egypt*, and that *Benjamin* must go thither also, he cries out, *All these things are against me* *. But All, who read the following Part of that most delightful and affecting Story, know, that he was mistaken. And his being bereaved of *Joseph* was the Means which God had appointed for the Preservation of him and his Family, in the Famine that lasted seven Years. *Joseph's Brethren* thought Evil against him when they sold him, hoping they should get rid of a troublesome Dreamer; little imagining, *this was the very Way* in which his Dreams, that gave them so much Disturbance, were to be accomplished. But God meant it for Good, as *Joseph* told them †.

We are often at a Loss with respect to God's providential Government of the World, and especially in What more nearly concerns our selves. But That in *Rom. viii. 28*, is enough to solve all Difficulties: *We know that all Things work together for Good, to them that love God.* We cannot tell how This should be: And what then? Therefore cannot God order, that it shall be so? None in their right Senses will argue thus. But if every thing works together for Good, then This among the Rest. And

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* Gen. xli. 36.

† Chap. i. 20.

therefore I will *hope, and quietly wait for the Salvation of the Lord.* If we have but a little Patience, we shall see Things cleared up. And though What God is doing *we know not now, yet we shall know hereafter*; as our Lord told Peter *.

II. The Second general Head is, *to demonstrate the Truth of the Proposition, or make it appear, that it is our Duty to bless God, not only when he gives, but also when he takes away.*

Most, I fear, are not so thankful as they ought to be for the Favours which they daily receive from God. All are too apt *to forget his Benefits.* However, though there are but Few, who will not at least own, that it is our Duty to bless God at such times; yet *this other Duty*, I mean of praising God, when he is depriving us of earthly Comforts, *is a very hard Saying*; and the Thoughts of most Hearts are, *Who can bear it †?* But when Grace is in lively Exercise, we can, not only *bear to bear it*, but can *practise it too.* And there is a great deal of Reason for it:

As in general, *'Tis God, who both gives and takes away.* And he is infinite in all Perfections. Therefore he must know What is *fittest* to be done; What is most for his own Glory, as well as best for us. But to mention some Particulars.

1st. God

* 1 John xiii. 7.

† Chap. vi. 60.

1st. *God only takes What he freely gave, or rather lent us.*

2dly. *He never told us, we should always enjoy our Relations, or that he would not call for them.*

3dly. *God may do this as an infinite Sovereign; nor will he give an Account of any of his Matters. But*

4thly. *He is righteous in all his Ways.*

5thly. *He might have taken them much sooner.*

6thly. *He might have deprived us of all other Comforts, both temporal and spiritual.*

7thly. *If our deceased Relations were truly religious, or made Partakers of saving Grace, God hath taken them out of a sinful, troublesome World, and at the Time which he thought best.*

8thly. *And lastly, Though God hath taken them from us, he hath taken them to Himself.*

1. *God, at such times as we are speaking of, only takes What he freely gave, or rather lent us. As, when we advance any thing towards the Support of his Interest in the World, we only give him of his own || : So when God takes Relations from us, he takes but of his own. We called them ours, but they are his, his Creatures and Property. He hath a better Right to them than we. All Creatures are his. He made them, and therefore must have a Right to dispose of them as he thinketh fit. And though he intrusts them to us, and commits them to our Care, he may, whenever he*

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pleases,

pleases, demand them of us. God was not obliged to give us Children. Some are denied *this Blessing, this Heritage of the Lord, or his Reward*, as they are called *. Consequently he can be under no Obligation to *continue them always* with us.

2. God never told us, *we should always enjoy* our Relations, or that *he would not call for them*. There is no such Promise as this in all the Bible. 'Tis true, when God bestows *special or saving Blessings* on Any, he will never take them away from the happy Possessors of them. *These Gifts of God are without Repentance* †. He never revoketh any such Grants as these. But This cannot be said of any temporal Blessing whatsoever. There are none of this kind, of which we may not be deprived; none but what we must leave at Death, if they do not leave us before.

Grace is *an incorruptible Seed* ‡. And where it is *once sown, or implanted, it always remains*. It may be in a manner *invisible*, and, as it were, *buried*: But it is not *dead*. It is indeed *immortal*. It cannot die, but will live for ever. Whereas, the nearest Relations, such as are most valuable in themselves, and most dear to us, are mortal. *The best of Men are dying Creatures*. And therefore it must be the greatest Folly *to trust in Man, whose Breath is in his Nostrils* §, *who is but Flesh and Grass*; cometh

* Psal. cxxvii. 3. † Rom. xi. 29. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 23.
§ Isai. ii. 22.

cometh forth as a Flower, and is soon cut down. We should trust in the Lord alone, and for ever; for he is the living God, and with him there is everlasting Strength †.

3. God may do this as an infinite Sovereign; nor will he give an Account of any of his Matters. It is Madness to strive against God. Potsherds of the Earth might, if that could be, much better strive with the Potter; for God is infinitely greater than Man*. God is an absolute Sovereign, and doth What he pleaseth both in Heaven and on Earth. And as None can controul him, or stay his Hand, so None should say to him, What dost thou ||? Shall Dust and Ashes expect the most High God to give an Account of his Proceedings, and the Reasons of them, to them? I am sure, it would be very unbecoming for us to desire it, and daring Presumption to demand it of him. How absurd, as well as wicked, is it, to pretend to bring God to our Bar? How provoking to him? How dangerous to ourselves? But,

4. God is righteous in all his Ways. He cannot but be so. He can no more be unrighteous or unjust than unholy. What is usually said of our Kings, That they can do no Wrong, Those who are about them being chargeable with Whatever is amiss, is strictly and properly true of God. We may some-

† Chap. xxvi. 4. * Job xxxii. 12, 13. || Dan. iv. 35.

times be ready to find Fault with Methods of his Government; but whenever we are so, 'tis owing to *Ignorance* and *Unbelief*. And They, who are most forward to charge God foolishly *now*, will, if not brought to Repentance, be most ashamed *in the Day of Judgment*. I am persuaded, the Damned themselves will own the Equity of that dreadful Sentence, which will then be past upon them; and think, if not say, *The Lord is righteous*, when he sends them to *Hell*; and orders them away *into everlasting Punishment*. What Appearance of Injustice is there in God's removing from us Such as were *the Desire of our Eyes*, and almost as dear to us as our own Souls? seeing, as I shewed before, they are by no means so much *ours* as *his*.

5. God might have taken them *much sooner*. We may think, they are gone *too soon*; but God was under no Obligation to continue them *so long* with us; to be such a Comfort to us, and give us so much Satisfaction, as, perhaps, they did, before they were removed from us. And this is a good Reason why we should bless God at such Times. Many do not enjoy their Relations *so long*, and have not *so much Ground to hope concerning them*, when they are gone, as we have.

6. God might have deprived us of *all other Comforts*, both *temporal* and *spiritual*. We have forfeited every Good, and should have had
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had no Reason to complain, if God had taken away all our Children; and *in the same manner too, or in a way equally awful and terrible with that, in which he took away Job's.*

And he might have stript us of *all other worldly Comforts*, and brought us to Poverty; so that instead of having *Plenty* of every thing, we might have been *in Want*.

God might also have taken *the Gospel* from us, or brought us into such Circumstances as might have deprived us of Opportunities of *bearing the Word*, and even of *reading it*: The Case of Many of our *Protestant Brethren* abroad, in *Popish Countries*.

Nay, God might also have *hid his Face from us*, and denied us *a Sense of his Love*, or comforting Presence. This, I believe, was by much the greatest of all *Job's Troubles*. We have him complaining in the Bitterness of his Soul, *O that I knew where I might find him!* viz. God. *Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him. On the left Hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: He hideth himself on the right Hand, that I cannot see him* *. What Reason have we to bless God, if it is not so with us?

7. If our deceased Relations were truly religious, or made Partakers of saving Grace, *God hath taken them out of a sinful, troublesome World,*

* Job xxiii. 3, 8, 9.

World, and at the Time which he thought best. For my part, I don't see What there is in this World to tempt Any to desire a long Stay in it, if they have good Hope through Grace, that they are prepared for another; unless it be to bring Glory to God, serve their Generation according to his Will, and do Good to others. All must allow, that the present is an evil World. There is a great deal of Sin in it, and therefore of Sorrow; from both which Believers are completely and eternally delivered as soon as they leave it. In the upper World there is neither Temptation without, nor Corruption within. The Inhabitants there are out of all Danger of ever sinning more; and consequently there will be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying, nor the least Pain, nor Sickness; for all these Things will be for ever passed away.*

8. And lastly, Though God hath taken them from us, he hath taken them to himself. And I am sure, to be with God and Christ is far better †, than to remain with us in this Vale of Tears: at least, better for them; and we should not envy their Happiness, but rejoice at it. They are no longer present with us; but they are in the more immediate Presence of God, where there is Fulness of Joy, and Pleasures for evermore ‥. The Places which knew them while here, shall know them no more;

* Rev. xxi. 4. † Phil. i. 23. ‥ Psa. lvi. 11.

more; but they are got to a much better Place. They are gone from us; but they are gone to Christ, whom their Souls loved. He hath received their Spirits, which they committed into his Hands. We weep for them; but God hath wiped away all Tears from their Eyes.

I might add, if we are true Believers, our pious Relatives, whose Death we lament, are only gone to Heaven a little before us. And though they will never return to us, it cannot be long before we shall go to them. We shall meet again in our heavenly Father's House, never to part more. This was what comforted David at the Death of his Child, whose Life he was very desirous of, and pleaded earnestly with God to spare*.

III. The third and last Thing is the Application.

1. If what hath been said is true, *Nothing comes by Chance.* To me Chance seems to be a Word without any determinate Meaning: Nor do I believe, they, who so often make use of it, can explain it to us, and perhaps scarce understand themselves What they intend by it. *Affliction cometh not forth of the Dust, neither doth Trouble spring out of the Ground †.* If a Sparrow doth not fall on the Ground without our Father †, surely Men, who are of so much more Value than many Sparrows, fall not into the Grave without God's Permission,

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mission,

* 2 Sam. xii. 16,—23. † Job v. 6. † Mat. x. 29, 31.

mission, or Appointment. He ordereth All, as to the *Time, Place and Manner* of our Death.

2. *How unbecomingly do they act, who are ready to murmur against God, when deprived of valuable Relations?* So far are Such from behaving like *Christians*, that they do not behave like *Men*. Many of the *Heathens* may shame them.

3. *How miserable must they be, who do not believe and eye the Providence of God in their Afflictions?* How do such Persons distress themselves with vain Imaginations! Had *This* been done, or *That* omitted, my *Husband*, my *Wife*, or my *Child* had not died; not considering, that there is an appointed *Time* to *Man*; that his *Days* are determined of *God*, and the *Number* of his *Months* are with him, who hath fixed the *Bounds* of our *Lives*, as well as of our *Habitations*, which we cannot pass*.

4. *What an excellent thing is Grace!* How much do *Believers* excel *Others*? So they should do; otherwise to what *Purpose* is the *Grace* of *God* bestowed on them? What *Burthens* cannot they bear, while they lean on *Christ* their *Beloved*? They can then even rejoice in *Tribulations*. " 'Tis all as my
" Heavenly Father sees meet; and he is infi-
" nitely wise and gracious. He designs my
" Good by all these *Troubles*; and therefore
" surely

“ surely I ought to say, and will say, *Blessed be the Name of the Lord.*”

What a Variety of Afflictions did David meet with ! And yet he resolved to *bless the Lord at all Times* ; and that his Praise should continually be in his Mouth *. And he called on other humble Souls to join with him in magnifying the Lord. *Let us*, says he, *exalt his Name together* †.

5. *Let us endeavour to be weaned from the nearest Relations and dearest Friends, to the End We may the more easily part with them, whenever God thinks fit to call for them.* The looser our Hearts are from them, the better. We are deprived of *Friends*, because we trusted too much in them, and expected too much from them ; and of *Children*, because we set our Affections too much on them : And we see our Error when it is too late. I have heard of a Minister of the Gospel, who would frequently say to Parents, *Take heed you don't love your Children into their Graves.* Love them we may and should ; but *these dear little Thieves*, as we may call them, are very apt to *steal away our Hearts*, which we find it very difficult to recover again.

6. and lastly, *This may reconcile us to the Death of godly Relations.* The Lord hath taken them to Heaven, to be for ever with him. Their Bodies, it is true, are laid in the cold

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and

† Psal. xxxiv. 1.

† Ver. 3.

and silent Grave; but, before we attended them thither, their Souls were *received up into Glory*; even as soon as they left their Habitations of Clay. When *Lazarus* died, he, *i. e.* his Soul, was immediately carried by the Angels into *Abraham's Bosom* *. And our Lord, when on the Cross, promised the penitent Thief, who was crucified with him, that *he should that very Day be with him in Paradise* †. As our deceased godly Relations did, as *Stephen*, commit their departing Spirits into the Hands of Christ, we may be assured, he received them, and will keep them to the Great Day.

And their Bodies also, which, because they *see Corruption*, we were obliged to *bury out of our Sight*, and commit to the Ground, and which *the Worms will feed sweetly on*, shall rise again, and be re-united to their Souls. For, as the Soul doth not at all sleep with the Body in the Grave, but at Death *returns to God who gave it* ‡; so neither shall the Body sleep there for ever. Nor can I conceive *why it should be thought a Thing incredible with Any, that GOD should raise the Dead* §. With Men, indeed, it is impossible; but not with God. What can be difficult to One, whose Power, as well as Understanding, is infinite? Did not God create this World out of Nothing? By Faith

* Luke xvi. 22. † Chap. xxiii. 43. ‡ Eccles. xii. 7.
§ Acts xxvi. 8.

Faith we understand, that the Things which are seen, were not made of Things which do appear ||. Suppose the Particles of Matter, of which our Bodies consist, should be scattered to never so great a Distance from each other, and undergo never so many Changes, doth not the all-seeing Eye of God discern where they are? And cannot the Arm of his Omnipotence collect them together, and form them again into their respective Bodies? Besides, the Bodies of Believers are united to Christ even in the Grave, and are to rest there only till the Resurrection: For when the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, shall appear the second Time, namely, at the Day of Judgment, he will, as a quickening Head, raise and change them, *that they may be fashioned like unto his own glorious Body* *. And when he hath openly acknowledged and acquitted them, and condemned the Wicked, and bid the Latter depart from him into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels; he will conduct his People to the Kingdom which was prepared for them from the Foundation of the World; and present them faultless before the Presence of his Glory, with exceeding Joy; and they shall live and reign with him for ever and ever. *Wherefore let us comfort one another with these Words* †.

But

|| Heb. xi. 3. * Phil. iii. 20, 21. † 1 Thes. iv. 18.

But they were very dear to us.

In all Probability too dear. And this may be the Reason why God took them from us.

But they were very hopeful and promising.

It may be, you had raised your Expectations of them too high, and promised yourselves too much from them.

Oh, but they might have been very useful in their Day, if God had spared them.

But it is plain, he had no Need of them, and no farther Work for them here.

But they were pious and godly.

The fitter then to die, and go to Heaven.

It will, perhaps, be expected, I should say Something concerning that young Person, my dear and only Son, whom, you will believe, I loved (it may be, too much) and whose Death is the Occasion of this Discourse. Giving flattering Titles to Any, is what, I hope; my Soul abhorreth. And it would very ill become me to do it in respect of One who was so near to me. What I shall mention will be with a Design to advance the Glory of FREE-GRACE, which, I know, makes One to differ from Another. And if the Deceased was in any Respect better than some Others, it was by the Grace of God he was what he was.

I shall not enlarge on his natural Endowments, and his great Diligence in improving them;

them * ;---his strict *Regard to Truth*; he not having, that I know of, ever been found in a *Falshood* ;---nor his constant *Attendance on public*

* I received the following Letter from the Reverend Mr. Walker his Tutor :

Plasterer's-Hall, March 7, 1748-9.

Dear S I R,

I heartily sympathize with you under your Affliction for the Loss of your Son, who was one of the most promising and hopeful Youths I ever knew. It brings a Gloom upon my Mind, as it must renew your Grief, to make mention of him. His agreeable Behaviour and unusual Progress in Learning, during the short Time he was under my Tuition, had greatly endeared him to me. He was with me, I think, only about a Year and Half; and in so little time he learned more than common Genius's do in several Years. He could read *Latin, Greek and Hebrew* very readily, without any previous Acquaintance with those Languages. He seemed to have a natural Turn for *Mathematics*. He understood the Elements of *Algebra and Geometry*, the Principles of *Geography and Astronomy*, only by hearing my Lectures on those Branches to the Gentlemen of the Academy. I had a particular Pleasure in him, and promised myself a great deal more in a Genius of such a Cast. It presaged to my Mind Something above the common Rate concerning him in future Life, had it pleased God to spare him. I hope and pray, you may be supported under so severe a Trial. *Who hath resisted his Will; or, who art thou, O Man, that repliest against God?*

Verily Man at his best Estate is Vanity; he cometh forth as a Flower, and is cut down; he fleeth as a Shadow, and continueth not. I am,

Dear S I R,

Yours, &c.

JOHN WALKER.

public Ordinances ; which were his Delight ; and his retiring to his Closet, when he was returned home from God's House, and committing to Writing What he could recollect of the Sermons he had been bearing. But I will confine myself to some remarkable Particulars in his last Sickness, which as they were no small Satisfaction to myself and All about him, will, I am persuaded, be, in the Rehearsal, a great Pleasure to you. And Oh that they may, thro' the Divine Blessing, be of some Service to Young Ones, and, in a more especial manner, to Those of you, who were acquainted with him ; with a particular View to whom I collected, and shall now deliver the following Things.

It was a very long Illness he was visited with, of above Eighteen Weeks Continuance ; and the Affliction All must allow to have been exceeding heavy. But he was enabled, through Grace, to bear it with great Patience.

He could not be easy without Family-Prayer in his Room every Day, Morning and Evening, when confined to his Bed ; which was continued to the last Evening of his Life. He was very desirous that his Friends should pray for him. And when I told him, they did remember him in their Prayers, he said, I am obliged to them ; I stand in great Need of it : But I hope, they pray for my Soul as well as my

my

my Body; that is what I would be most concerned about: As for my Body, I am very easy what becomes of it.

At another time he said to me, I have such a hard Heart, that I can't pray as I would. I told him, a Sense of this was a good Sign; and that he would not have complained of the Hardness of his Heart, if it had not been in some measure softened: That he knew, Prayer did not consist in a Multitude of Words; but that God was acquainted with our Thoughts; and that I was persuaded he desired spiritual Blessings, &c. To which he answered, My Heart is so deceitful, I can't trust it. At another Time he said, I am so pestered with vain Thoughts, I scarce know what to do, and should be glad if I could have my Mind filled with good Thoughts.

He was very jealous of himself. I am afraid, said he, lest my Fear should only be of Hell. One Night I had some Comfort; but I am afraid lest it should not be right; though, if he knew any thing of his own Heart, he desired to love God and Christ.

I asked him, what he thought of his own Righteousness? He answered, he looked upon it as Nothing, and his whole Dependance was on Christ. I cannot but believe he is able to save the Chief of Sinners. Satan, said he, hath been very busy with me, endeavouring to persuade me it was Time enough: But he had seen through it.

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A sick

A sick Bed, said he, is a very unfit Time; Persons have then enough to do to grapple with their Disorders. He expressed his Fear lest he had resisted the Holy Spirit, and that he had withdrawn from him: That he had never been pricked in his Heart, &c. You will suppose I said what I could to satisfy and comfort him. I told him, God had various Ways of bringing home Sinners to himself. And that such as had a religious Education, and had been so happy as to be favoured with restraining Grace, did not ordinarily feel so much Horror and Terror, as other greater Sinners were made to feel in their Conversion.

About an Hour before his Death, though he had dozed and talked much in his sleep, the greatest Part of the preceding Day and Night, he spoke very sensibly. He perceived himself going, and bid us all farewell, who were sorrowing about him. Farewel, Farewel, Farewel, said he, I am dying; God bless you all.---O God, draw me to thy self at this Time, I intreat thee. Draw me, and I will run after thee.---O Lord hear me now I cry to thee.---I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.---Lord Jesus receive my Spirit. I told him, I did not doubt but God had drawn him with the Cords of Love. I hope so, said he. I said to him, I am persuaded, God hath loved you with an everlasting Love, and that he will love you for ever. I know, he returned, where God loveth

loveth once, he will love unto the End. I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee; and added, But we can't love him, unless he first loveth us. I told him, I hoped he was going to a Place where he would sing Hallelujahs to God and Christ for ever. To which he replied, DELIGHTFUL WORK! These were, I think, the last Words he spoke; in a very few Minutes after which, he fell asleep (I trust) in Jesus, without Sigh or Groan.

*And now, my dear young Friends, let me beseech you to consider the End of his Conversation. Beg of God to give you Grace, that you may live the Life of the Righteous; and then you may be assured, you will die his Death, and your last End will be like his. Don't content yourselves with going to and from the Place of the Holy; but make Conscience of secret Prayer; and be earnest with God, that, as you are trained up by your pious Parents in the Way you should go, you may never depart from it *. See to it, that you have an Interest in Christ. Without this you can have no Security, much less can you have Comfort in a dying Hour. You find Others die as young as you. Whatever was praise-worthy in those who are gone before, endeavour to imitate; and be Followers of them, who, through Faith and Patience, do now inherit the Promises †.*

* Prov. xxii. 6.

† Heb. vi. 12.



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F I N I S

P O E M

On the DEATH of

Master JOSEPH PITTS,

Who departed this Life, *February 23, 1748-9,*
in the 16th Year of his Age, address'd to
the Revd. Mr. PITTS, the Father of the
Deceased.

Immodicis brevis est alas, et rara Senectus.

MARTIAL.

TO sooth a Parent's agonizing Woe,
Such as a Parent's Breast alone can know,
Tho' my young Branches flourish round
my Board,

And the sweet Hopes of future Life afford,

I, inly touch'd with sympathetic Smart,

Would fain convey a Cordial to your Heart.

I grant, Dear Sir, the Loss that you bemoan

Claims the full Tear, and vindicates the Groan :

For who in Death an only Son can view,

A Son, where each adorning SCIENCE grew,

A Son,

A POEM, &c.

A Son, o'er whose distinguish'd Days of Youth
Spread the fair Blooms of PIETY and TRUTH,
And not indulge fond Nature in her Sighs,
Her downcast Anguish, and her streaming Eyes?
But still, my Friend, amidst the Storm of Grief
Check the wild Surges, and admit Relief;
Know that kind Heav'n enlightens o'er the Gloom,
And gives thy Joys to blossom from the Tomb:
O let not Sorrow's large descending Dew
Dim o'er thine Eyes, and hide them from thy View.
Think, think how much thou ow'st to gracious
Heav'n
That to thy Arms so rich a Boon was giv'n:
How did his early Days and Months impart
A Glow of Transport to thy tender Heart?
How raptur'd thou in that auspicious Hour
When Reason's Bud disclos'd the latent Pow'r?
How high the Bliss that o'er thy Bosom flow'd,
When his young Ear drank in celestial Good,
When half-form'd Sentences, and filial Smiles
Kindled thy Hopes, and overpaid thy Toils?
And sure 'twas Blessing Life's rough Tract to strow
With flow'ry Pleasures, and beguile thy Woe.
But when thy Child to youthful Years attain'd,
And, like the Sun's ascending Fires, had gain'd

A P O E M, &c.

A warmer Zeal, and more diffusive Light,
Though distant still from his meridian Height;
When he with prosp'rous Pains explor'd the Mines,
Where LEARNING'S deep-embosom'd Treasure
shines;

When he, escaping the dark downward Way,
Aim'd the strait Path to everlasting Day,
Watch'd at fair WISDOM'S Gate with constant Care,
And learnt to know his Maker's Pleasure there,
How wast thou honour'd & honour'd, that from
Thee

A Youth should rise, renown'd for PRETTY;
A Youth alike prepar'd for either State,
To traverse Life, or meet the Blow of Fate,
Or here to dwell divinely good and wise,
Or spring triumphant to the better Skies,

“ What you suggest, methinks, I hear you say,
“ Augments my Griefs, but never can allay :
“ For if sublime in heav'nly Graces he,
“ Then I'm supreme in hopeless Misery,
“ Since cruel Death, that made my Child his Prey,
“ Has snatch'd his Virtues and his Charms away.”

But cease, my Friend : has not the Lord of all
A sov'reign Right his Favours to recall ?
Are not thy Children more his own than thine,
Their Reason his, and his the Grace divine ?

Then

Then tax not Heav'n

That rather lent than

But, as th' unfailin

And may thy Soul a

O let thy Faith tran

And trace the Joys,

The Saint possesses in

Where Light unclou

reigns:

Thither, oh thither

And feel, while rising

This new attraction

That to the rejo

Infinite Bliss, and Ex

Mean time be thankf

To nurse Immortals

I hear you say

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Child his Pre

his Charms away

the Lord of all

is to recall

which man thin

Grace divine

Then

A P O E M, &c.

Heav'n, as harsh in its Decree,
Than gave thy Son to thee.
Infalling Cure of thy Distress,
Soul admit this full Redress!
I transcend the Bounds of Time,
Joys, immortal and sublime,
Lies in the blissful Plains,
Unclouded shines, and Life eternal
Neither may'st thou bend thy Way,
Rising to the Realms of Day,
To that World above,
Rejoin'd thou soon shalt prove
And Extacy of Love:
Thankful that to thee 'tis giv'n
Portals to replenish Heav'n.

